



March 12, 2018

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Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Susan Pronovost and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Greenhouse Growers Association (“CGGA”). The CGGA represents the interests of some 200 family-owned greenhouse growers and farmers in the State of Connecticut.

The members of the Connecticut Greenhouse Growers Association encourage adoption of ***SB 427 An Act Concerning Public Trust Components of the State Water Plan***. This bill addresses one of the concerns our agricultural producers have expressed pertaining to the concept of water being part of the “*public trust*”. We appreciate the concept of the “public trust”; however, the public trust should not encroach upon the rights of individual property owners and water users – in our case, agricultural water users.

The rights of the public trust should not supersede the rights of agricultural water users who have, in many cases, invested tens of thousands of dollars in installing and maintaining private water systems that comply to state and local regulations to supply these agricultural business enterprises.

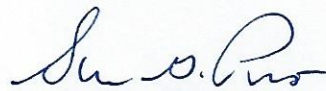
In furtherance of its support for this Honorable Committee’s endorsement of this bill, the members of the Connecticut greenhouse industry would like to make note that should “the public trust” be allowed to remain in the Water Conservation Plan, it could potentially enhance a situation where water access and usage rights to private wells may be impeded via overriding authority under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act, thus nullifying the language of existing statutes that protect those very rights.

Greenhouse growers are industry leaders in the conservation of water and protection of our valuable natural resources. We appreciate the task that lies before the Environment Committee to strike a balance between the needs of the public's access to our natural resources and the needs of private water users who have spent considerable financial resources to the planning, development, and ongoing maintenance of private wells and water infrastructure that has ensured their access to water to conduct their agricultural business enterprises.

In our opinion, the rights of the public cease when a private entity has invested so many thousands of dollars on private land and water infrastructure to ensure access and supply of this most important resource to their businesses.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our views on this important piece of legislation and for your consideration of same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan G. Pronovost".

Susan G. Pronovost
Executive Director